

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Joan Walters

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Statecraft – Jim Edgar Oral History project

Interview # ISG-A-L-2009-024

Joan Walters, Jim Edgar's Chief of Staff during his tenure as Secretary of State, and his Budget Director when governor, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – Jim Edgar* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: July 15, 2009 Location: Walters residence, Springfield, IL

Date: July 29, 2009 Location: Walters residence, Springfield, IL

Date: August 13, 2009 Location: Walters residence, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston MA

Edited by: Mike Czaplicki, editor–Edgar Oral History project, & Rozanne Flatt, ALPL
volunteer

Total Pages: 99 pages Total Time: 2:34 + 2:08 + 1:13 / 2.57 + 2.13 + 1.22 = 5.92 hrs

Session 1: Walter's early life thru service as Sec. of State Jim Edgar's COS

Session 2: Walter's work as Governor Jim Edgar's Budget Director, 1991-97

Session 3: Walter's work in reorg of DHS & as the Dir. of Public Aid in 1998

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 09/22/2009.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in
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Abstract

Joan Walters, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISG-A-L-2009-024

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Joan Roth was born on February 13th, 1940 in Chicago, Illinois, and grew up on the south side of Chicago in a poor family. She attended parochial schools, and then attended Maryknoll Convent School in Ossining, New York, with the intention of becoming a nun. When she changed her plans, Joan returned to the Chicago area, and soon was married to Richard Schilf. Over the next several years the couple moved several times and began a family, returning to the Chicago area in the mid 1960s. Once there, Joan became active in the Hazel Crest school board, while also working on her college education at nights. When she divorced, she was encouraged by Professor Paula Wolff, who was then working on state government reorganization, to become involved as well. This began Walters' career in government.

Walters' was selected to work on Governor Jim Thompson's transition team before becoming a legislative liaison for the Governor, where she first met Representative Jim Edgar. When Edgar became Thompson's Legislative Liaison, Joan worked for Edgar. When Thompson appointed Edgar as Secretary of State in 1981, Walters became Edgar's Chief of Staff. She served in this capacity until 1986 when she and husband Michael Walters moved to Seattle. When Edgar became governor in 1991, Walters served as his Budget Director, helping lead the budget fight through several very tough budget cutting years. When the economy improved in the mid 1990s, Walters sought other challenges. She led a task force reorganizing the state's Department of Human Services, then in late 1997 became the Director of Public Aid, responsible for the state's Medicaid program and child support enforcement, where she served for the remainder of Edgar's term.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Maryknoll Convent School; Paula Wolff; Governor Jim Thompson; reorganization of Illinois government; Jim Edgar as Secretary of State; 1982 Equal Rights Amendment fight in Illinois; Jim Edgar as Governor of Illinois; Mark Boozell; Mike Lawrence; Allen Grosboll; Budget Director for Illinois, 1991-1997; George Ryan; Mike Madigan; Phil Rock; Flood of 1993; reorganization of Dept. of Human Services; Department of Public Aid - 1997; Illinois Medicaid program; child support enforcement

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